



NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS MEETING
Salisbury Community Appearance Commission

Thursday, October 29, 2009
4:00 p.m.
One Water Street

MINUTES

In attendance: James N. Alexander, Garth Birdsey, Maggie Blackwell, Dorothy Campbell, Greta Connor (Chair), James Donaldson, Sarah Hawkins, Almeader Holt, Mimi Howard, Shirley Johnson, Frank Justin, Sue McHugh, Franklin N. Mills, Sr., Barbara Perry, Carl Peters, Lorraine Reidda, Doug Robinson, Sara Robinson, Bill Safrit, Missy Shives, and Barbara Sorel

City Staff: Janet Gapen, Councilman Mark Lewis, Diana Moghrabi, Lynn Raker and, Joe Morris

Neighborhoods Represented: Brooklyn South Square, City Park, Country Club Hills, Downtown, Ellis Street Graded School District, Fulton Heights, Green Hills, Jersey City, Meadow Brook, Milford Hills, Milford Knoll, North Main (NOMA), Park Avenue, Sedgefield Acres, West End, and West Square

The meeting began with some refreshment and greeting time. Neighborhoods and Education Committee Chair Greta Connor welcomed the attendees and made introductions before turning the meeting over to Lynn Raker. Ms. Connor encouraged neighborhoods to be diligent. The City is no better than its worst neighborhood.

HISTORY OF THE NLA

Lynn Raker, staff liaison to the CAC, opened with a Power Point presentation that brought neighborhoods up-to-date on items discussed at the previous meetings.

Spring 2005

- Recommendation for neighborhood entrance signs
- Neighborhood leaders' brochure

Fall 2005

- Front-yard parking problem identified
- Decision to hold goals-setting session
- Goals-setting session held in January 2006
- Name: *Neighborhood Leaders Alliance*
- Priority Goal: Address deteriorated housing

Spring 2006

Housing subcommittee set up to address deteriorated housing

Subcommittee meets over next four months

Fall 2006

Subcommittee presents findings and recommendations to City Council

Installation of Park Avenue Neighborhood signs

Front-yard parking addressed in Land Development Ordinance (January 2007)

Spring 2007

City Manager sets up Better Housing staff committee (findings and recommendations reflect NLA's)

Fall 2007

Meeting with Councilman Lewis to reiterate NLA concern with housing

February 2008 City Council retreat – goal to address code enforcement

Spring 2008

Vicious dog meeting

Council allocates funding for Code Services Manager and additional enforcement staff

Fall 2008

Code Services Manager Chris Branham introduced to NLA

Milford Hills request

Spring 2009

Doug Paris facilitates meeting on strengthening neighborhood associations

Subcommittee develops Guide for Neighborhood Associations

Installation of Fairview Heights sign

Installation of Jersey City Neighborhood sign

Fall 2009

Discuss Housing Commission

Set up subcommittee to prepare blueprint for housing commission to present to Council

OPEN DISCUSSION

- There was a request at this meeting to make data available online from Code Services. The S.N.A.G. Report would also be nice to have online.
- A request came for a windshield survey of Green Hills; potholes are reported in the area. Joe Morris and Councilman Lewis made an appointment to do the survey with a resident of Green Hills. This neighborhood is geographically isolated. Some properties do not appear to be in E. Spencer nor Salisbury, but the County.
- There was also a request to meet more frequently; either once a month or once quarterly. Lynn Raker pointed out the time constraints on staff. The CAC will address this request. It may be possible to dedicate a regular CAC meeting to neighborhood leaders' issues.
- Find the root cause of poor housing and appearance issues.
- Strengthen city codes and enforcement.
- Hear complaints.
- Go beyond the minimum housing code.
- Research process for inspections on Section 8 housing.
- Educate landlords.

- Get some teeth behind enforcement.
- The public needs a place to go to speak out.
- A housing commission could funnel the above and work on greater issues. A housing commission could address the empty house syndrome, poor conditions and protect both the landlord and tenant.
- A subcommittee was formed to research the role and prepare a blueprint for a future Salisbury Housing Commission. (Barbara Perry, Greta Connor, Bill Safrit, Mimi Howard, Garth Birdsey, Lorraine Reidda, Sara Robinson, Chris Branham, Lynn Raker, and Diana Moghrabi)
- Provide a Hotline, Web site, email submission for information and reporting. Allow anonymous reporting. (Chris Branham has met with a software company to upgrade technology.)
- Provide cross training.
- Keep “the cause” moving.
- Allocate resources at the Council Retreat.
- Provide incentive to landlords. Give them a gold or platinum rating for being good landlords. Good landlords may earn exemption from between-renter inspections.

Long-term neighborhood leader of the West End, Fannie Butler, said she has been trying for decades to improve her neighborhood and insists things must change. We must find a better way of addressing negligent property owners.

The codes we currently have are starting to work. Salisbury, like much of the nation, is seeing many lender foreclosures. There are nearly 40 houses in various states of notifications and up to 50 houses in various states of notifications today.

Councilman Lewis has been a strong supporter of the CAC. He encouraged leaders to stay engaged and to be sure resources make the City budget this year.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Connor adjourned the meeting.